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General Assembly
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Official Records

10th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 22 September 2010, 10 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 p.m.

High-level plenary meeting as a contribution to the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity

Agenda item 20 (*continued*)

Sustainable development

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity

The President (*spoke in French*): This is the closing plenary of the high-level meeting as a contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity. I wish to welcome all the high-level guests who have joined us today. We have had fruitful discussions throughout the day.

(*spoke in English*)

Today, as a contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity, world leaders met for the first time for a high-level meeting of the General Assembly on biodiversity and reaffirmed the political will to reverse the alarming loss of biodiversity occurring throughout our planet. I am very pleased to present a summary of today's meaningful discussions, which I will transmit to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held next month in Nagoya, Japan.

First, Member States and other participants emphasized the importance of biodiversity and healthy ecosystems for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, especially in poverty eradication. They drew attention to the fact that continued biodiversity loss can have a particularly adverse impact on the poor and other populations that depend on such natural resources as fisheries and agriculture. In order to protect biodiversity and its many services, including clean water, medicine and a buffer against natural disasters, Member States and other participants noted that it is important fully to achieve the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

In this regard, they attached great significance to securing successful outcomes at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. That meeting will address three interconnected issues: access to and benefit sharing of genetic resources, a post-2010 strategic plan for biodiversity, and international support for the implementation of biodiversity strategies in developing countries. They recognized that progress on one issue would depend upon progress on the other two.

While noting the progress made to date towards the negotiation of the draft protocol on access to and benefit sharing of genetic resources, Member States and other participants shared the concern that some issues are still outstanding. They called for a stronger political impetus and flexibility on the part of all parties in the negotiations to ensure the adoption of an effective protocol at the Nagoya meeting.

The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties will present an important opportunity to develop a post-2010 strategic plan that contains ambitious, measurable and time-bound biodiversity targets for 2020. That plan would provide a common

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framework for action on biodiversity at the international, regional, national and local levels and across various issues, from terrestrial species protection to the halting of ocean acidification. If the strategic plan is to be translated into a concrete outcome, it will need to be integrated into national biodiversity targets and strategies.

A decade for biodiversity, as well as the proposed South-South multi-year plan of action, would support the implementation of the new strategic plan. Furthermore, noting the important linkage between scientific knowledge and effective policy-making, Member States and other participants stressed the importance of establishing an intergovernmental science-policy platform for biodiversity and ecosystem services, and welcomed the progress achieved at the intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting held in June 2010 in Busan, Republic of Korea, and facilitated by the United Nations Environment Programme.

The true economic values of biodiversity and the ecosystem services it underpins are now being identified to their full extent. Member States and other participants considered it important that such investigation continue as a matter of priority. They called for strengthening the biodiversity and economy nexus by incorporating the true values of biodiversity into economic theory, financial planning and investments in all sectors, as well as in policy and planning processes at all levels.

The green economy, the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity, and payments for ecosystem services were mentioned as important concepts and initiatives. Member States and other participants also recognized that biodiversity and healthy ecosystems are an essential part of the solution to the challenges of climate change. They noted that there are substantial benefits to be gained from the coherent implementation of the three Rio conventions, as well as other biodiversity-related conventions. For example, initiatives for reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation could provide co-benefits for biodiversity and local livelihoods. The upcoming Nagoya and Cancún meetings later this year and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 will provide timely opportunities to ensure that measures taken under the related conventions are mutually supportive.

Recognizing that many countries lack the resources and capabilities effectively to implement their biodiversity strategies and commitments, Member States and participants called for bold action to ensure that these countries have access to financial resources and technology transfer. They also called for increased capacity-building and scientific and technical cooperation. In addition, Member States and other participants emphasized the need to mobilize civil society and the private sector. Indigenous and local communities, women and youth should be fully involved in the implementation of the new biodiversity strategic plan.

Finally, noting that the Geneva call for action issued by past and future presidencies of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Member States and participants noted that if current rates of biodiversity loss are not reversed, there will be drastic consequences for human societies. They recognized the need for coordinated and urgent action across all sectors of Government and society to address the underlying drivers of biodiversity loss. There is a need to reform our means of production, consumption and economic growth to ensure that we live within the ecological limits. Together, we can find ways to protect Mother Earth and live in harmony with nature.

(*spoke in French*)

I call on the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Ms. Salerno Caldera (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): My country, Mr. President, wishes to recognize your efforts in putting together today's talks. We have a question. Is it possible to modify the language of the summary you have just read out? We feel that the paragraph concerning the platform on technical services is not an exact reflection of today's conversations and presentations. May I ask you clarify this so that I can then explain further?

The President (*spoke in French*): We note the statement made by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. My summary does not mention the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, so I would be perfectly happy to listen to any additional comment she may wish to make now. I might add that the summary I read out is a summary of the debate

prepared by those who organized it; it is not an official document of the General Assembly.

Ms. Salerno Caldera (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The question of biological diversity is a substantive and essential issue comprised of many, highly technical components. At this time, the issue of the platform is on the substantive agenda of the discussions to take place at the Nagoya Conference.

The summary mentions that Member States stressed the importance of establishing a platform. That prejudges the results of the Nagoya Conference and does not reflect the fact that various States, including my country, pointed out that, first, the Committee concluded that the question had not been addressed and we believed that it should have been; and that, secondly, the text does not reflect our position that not all Member States have recognized the importance of establishing such a platform.

My country in particular would like to know whether it would be possible to amend the language. We believe that it would be better to say that some States considered the importance of establishing a platform. In that way, the interactive debate we held today would not be prejudging the outcome of Nagoya.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly takes note of the statement made by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. As I said, the substantive discussion will take place in Nagoya.

We have now come to the end of our deliberations. I thank all participants for their patience, and especially those who have stayed to the very end.

The meeting rose at 10.20 p.m.